Facts About AIDS And African Americans

- **African Americans account** for 13 percent of the US population. Yet, they account for nearly 50% of AIDS cases.. By the year 2005, that number will rise to 60 percent.

- **In 1997, Black** people accounted for 57 percent of new HIV infections.

- **250,000 to 325,000** African Americans are infected with HIV.

- **One in 50** Black men is HIV-positive. One in 160 Black women is positive.

- **AIDS is the** number one cause of death for Black men and women aged 25 to 44, before heart disease, cancer and homicide.

- **African American women** constituted 60 percent of female AIDS cases in 1997.

- **More African American** children are infected with HIV than children of all other races and ethnicities combined.

- **Black senior citizens** represent more than 50 percent of HIV cases among persons over age 55.

- **Black people are** not benefiting from new antiretroviral treatments. Estimated incidence of AIDS opportunistic illnesses for 1995-1996 decreased 13 percent and five percent for Whites and Hispanics, respectively, but decreased zero percent for Black people.

- **Injection drug use** is responsible for most HIV transmission among African Americans, either due to personal drug use or through sex with a drug abuser.

- **Compared with the** four other federally recognized racial/ethnic groups (Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Native American, White), African Americans have the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS, the highest mortality rates and the most years of life lost.

- **In May 1998,** the Congressional Black Caucus called for the Department of Health and Human Services to declare a state of public health emergency due to AIDS among Black people. In recent months, their concern was echoed in statements by leading Black organizations, including the NAACP, the Urban League, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Delta Sigma Theta sorority.

Statistics provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

About The Balm In Gilead

- The Balm In Gilead is the only organization working nationally and abroad that is dedicated to mobilizing churches to respond to AIDS among Black people.

- The Balm In Gilead receives funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Ford Foundation, the Public Welfare Foundation and other public, private and corporate sources.

- The Kaiser Family Foundation has funded The Balm In Gilead to create the first curriculum for Sunday Schools that integrates Christian theology and AIDS education.

- In 1996, The Balm In Gilead organized the first benefit concert to gather world-class performers to address HIV/AIDS specifically among African Americans. The event, entitled *Jessye Norman Sings for the Healing of AIDS,* featured Miss Norman, Maya Angelou, Whoopi Goldberg, Elton John, Toni Morrisson and others.

About The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS
March 7 – 13, 1999

- In 1998, coalitions of churches, community-based organizations and public agencies organized observances in: Atlanta, Boston, Cleveland, Chicago, Connecticut, Detroit, Kansas City (MO), Long Island (NY), Miami, Nashville, New York City and San Francisco. It is anticipated that in 1999, the number of participating churches and organizations will more than double.

- Churches observe the week through special Sunday worship services, educational workshops, gospel concerts, prayer vigils and citywide bell chime memorials for people who have died.

- The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS is endorsed by every major Black church denomination and organization. These include:

  - The African American Lutheran Association
  - The African Methodist Episcopal Church
  - The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
  - The Black Catholic Caucus
  - The Black Methodists for Church Renewal
  - The Black Presbyterians
  - The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
  - The Church of God In Christ
  - The Congress of National Black Churches
  - The Disciples of Christ National Convocation
  - The National Baptist Convention, USA
  - The National Baptists Convention of American
  - The Progressive National Baptist Convention
  - T.D. Jakes Ministries
  - The Union of Black Episcopalians
  - The United Black Christians